

Northeast Area Periodicals Focus Group – July 14th, 2011 Minutes

Ted Freedman, Industry Co-Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded the attendees to fill out their survey form before leaving. Ted introduced William Schnaars, NYC District Manager.

Mr. Schnaars gave an overview on the USPS complement trend over the last ten years. The USPS has made an enormous effort to reduce staffing mostly through attrition geared around automation. These efforts have resulted in an overall complement decline of 200,000 with 100,000 eliminated in the last two years alone. Mr. Schnaars also spoke on the NYC complement trend and assured the group that precautions are always taken to protect service. Currently, NYC is looking at customer service space optimization in which USPS facilities are closed, sold or consolidated. Current initiatives in NYC include moving Peck Slip carriers to Church Street station, selling the Bronx GPO after the AMP and consolidating FDR, Grand Central, Murray Hill and Village stations.

Cathy Moon, FSS Project Lead, USPS Headquarters gave a detailed presentation which included information on Standardized Critical Entry Times, (CET) Periodical Processing Policy, FSS Optional Prep and FSS Entry Specifications. Ms. Moon advised the group that the focus is to reduce the cost of processing periodicals by creating a Standardized Operating Procedure SOP and a clear Processing Policy for Periodicals. This will enable the USPS to align processing expectations (efficiency) with service standards. Ms. Moon also advised that starting tomorrow she will be working as the A/Manager Mail Transport Equipment, replacing Jim Hardie who retired. She mentioned that the MTEOR program (Mail Transport Equipment Ordering System) is on hold pending funding and approval. A question was raised by Brian Martens of The Economist about whether the significant increase his company has recently noticed in damage complaints is tied to FSS processing. Ms. Moon will follow up on this issue and get back to the group.

Jim O'Brien, Time Inc. VP Distribution & Postal Affairs, offered a publishers view on FSS prep and Postal Reform. Jim stated that in running an FSS prep, Time had a postage rate increase of \$1200.00, firm bundles falling into sacks and out of scheme pallets and for the first time, some things fell into zone 1 and 2. This is why Time is currently not doing FSS prep. Jim also discussed the current 4 bills on Postal reform, 2 in the House and 2 in the Senate. In his description, Jim stated that 3 of the proposals fix the FERS/CSRS overpayment with the exception of Congressman Issa who views this option as a bailout. Jim stated that no one knows for sure what will be included in the final bill, but the Senate will probably be forced towards the Issa bill. A question was raised on 2012 budgeting and Jim replied that Time budgeted 3% based on the CPI from September data which showed it to be at 2.9%. Jim mentioned that you can't forget that the exigent case is still out there and though a wild card, if the PRC approves an increase, periodicals could wind up with as much as 8 ½ percent total.

Chuck Tricamo, Manager National Customer Ruling gave a brief PCSC update on Statement of Ownership and Legitimate Requests. Chuck reminded everyone that Statement of Ownership forms must be submitted or transmitted to USPS Original Entry by October 1st. He advised mailers that Telephone Requests must have an audible record which includes a copy of the text, interview date and interviewer signature. Website Requests must include a copy of the email, email reply, request date, title name, subscription length and subscriber name and address.

Ed Mayhew, President Classification Station added that the meeting was very productive and there are some real concerns with these Postal bills before Congress. He advised the group to not sit back and wait to see what happens. Instead, Ed urged everyone to contact their Congressional Representative to voice their opinion.

Ted brought the meeting to an end with a few announcements. The next Red tag meeting will be held in NYC on Thursday, August 4th and National PCC Day is September 21st which will be held at the Custom House in Bowling Green.

Congratulations to our drawing winner Ed Mayhew of Classification Station who received an Abraham Lincoln print, (and two cents).

The next Periodical Focus Group meeting in New York City is on Thursday, October 6th, 2011.

All presentations are online at ribbs.usps.gov.